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Exclusive report . . .

Newsday's Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative team spent six months probing into matters of public policy and private concern in connection with investments and activities of former Sen. George A. Smathers (D-Fla.) and Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, and their relationship with President Nixon, who maintains a Florida White House in Key Biscayne. In the course of their reporting the team examined more than 20,000 records and conducted more than 400 interviews.

How U.S. land deals favor Nixon friends Rebozo, Smathers

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Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, President Nixon's closest friend and the only private citizen living in the Florida White House compound on Key Biscayne, received "kid glove" treatment when the U.S. government bought land from him for the Biscayne National Monument in 1969.

Rebozo and his associates quickly received close-to-appraisal prices on an island plot while other landowners were being offered lower prices on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.

Rebozo, through an attorney, then demanded — and received — a higher-than-appraisal price on a second piece of property.

The principal property in question, Adams Key, was the home of the Cocolobo Cay Club, a fading resort which over the years had accommodated such visitors as Presidents Harding and Hoover and Presidents-to-be Johnson and Nixon. The latter two were there as guests of Rebozo and his close associate, former Sen. George A. Smathers (D-Fla.).

The government bought Adams Key from the Rebozo group for $550,000. Subsequently, Rebozo's brother-in-law was put on the federal payroll as a caretaker-watchman on the island, the same job he had held for Rebozo and his associates in a private capacity. And one of Rebozo's partners, his lawyer, Thomas Wakefield, rented the caretaker's cottage back from the United States for $350 a year—for personal use until such time as the monument opened for public use.

Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo (right), close friend of President Nixon, received "kid glove" treatment when he sold Florida islands to the U.S.

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A. E. N. Westcott, an Army Corps of Engineers official who negotiated the land sale, said he was given to understand at a meeting of corps officials that Rebozo should be "treated with kid gloves" because high-ranking persons in his department felt that "we were supposed to be dealing with someone who was an intimate of people in high places."

Another official said that speedy handling

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GEORGE A. SMATHERS